

under the Americans it has been transformed to 'imminent and active threat,' a foreign policy failure bound to haunt the United States for decades to come.

Iraqis like to call this mess "the situation." When asked "how are things?" they reply: "the situation is very bad."

What they mean by situation is this: the Iraqi government doesn't control most Iraqi cities, there are several car bombs going off each day around the country killing and injuring scores of innocent people, the country's roads are becoming impassable and littered by hundreds of landmines and explosive devices aimed to kill American soldiers, there are assassinations, kidnappings and beheadings. The situation, basically, means a raging barbaric guerilla war. In four days, 110 people died and over 300 got injured in Baghdad alone. The numbers are so shocking that the ministry of health—which was attempting an exercise of public transparency by releasing the numbers—has now stopped disclosing them.

Insurgents now attack Americans 87 times a day.

A friend drove thru the Shiite slum of Sadr City yesterday. He said young men were openly placing improvised explosive devices into the ground. They melt a shallow hole into the asphalt, dig the explosive, cover it with dirt and put an old tire or plastic can over it to signal to the locals this is booby-trapped. He said on the main roads of Sadr City, there were a dozen landmines per every ten yards. His car snaked and swirled to avoid driving over them. Behind the walls sits an angry Iraqi ready to detonate them as soon as an American convoy gets near. This is in Shiite land, the population that was supposed to love America for liberating Iraq.

For journalists the significant turning point came with the wave of abductions and kidnappings. Only two weeks ago we felt safe around Baghdad because foreigners were being abducted on the roads and highways between towns. Then came a frantic phone call from a journalist female friend at 11 p.m. telling me two Italian women had been abducted from their homes in broad daylight. Then the two Americans, who got beheaded this week and the Brit, were abducted from their homes in a residential neighborhood. They were supplying the entire block with round the clock electricity from their generator to win friends. The abductors grabbed one of them at 6 a.m. when he came out to switch on the generator; his beheaded body was thrown back near the neighborhoods.

The insurgency, we are told, is rampant with no signs of calming down. If any thing, it is growing stronger, organized and more sophisticated every day. The various elements within it—Baathists, criminals, nationalists and Al Qaeda—are cooperating and coordinating.

I went to an emergency meeting for foreign correspondents with the military and embassy to discuss the kidnappings. We were somberly told our fate would largely depend on where we were in the kidnapping chain once it was determined we were missing. Here is how it goes: criminal gangs grab you and sell you up to Baathists in Fallujah, who will in turn sell you to Al Qaeda. In turn, cash and weapons flow the other way from Al Qaeda to the Baathists to the criminals. My friend Georges, the French journalist snatched on the road to Najaf, has been missing for a month with no word on release or whether he is still alive.

America's last hope for a quick exit? The Iraqi police and National Guard units we are spending billions of dollars to train. The cops are being murdered by the dozens every day—over 700 to date—and the insurgents are

infiltrating their ranks. The problem is so serious that the U.S. military has allocated \$6 million to buy out 30,000 cops they just trained to get rid of them quietly.

As for reconstruction: firstly it's so unsafe for foreigners to operate that almost all projects have come to a halt. After two years, of the \$18 billion Congress appropriated for Iraq reconstruction only about \$1 billion or so has been spent and a chunk has now been reallocated for improving security, a sign of just how bad things are going here.

Oil dreams? Insurgents disrupt oil flow routinely as a result of sabotage and oil prices have hit record high of \$49 a barrel. Who did this war exactly benefit? Was it worth it? Are we safer because Saddam is holed up and Al Qaeda is running around in Iraq?

Iraqis say that thanks to America they got freedom in exchange for insecurity. Guess what? They say they'd take security over freedom any day, even if it means having a dictator ruler.

I heard an educated Iraqi say today that if Saddam Hussein were allowed to run for elections he would get the majority of the vote. This is truly sad.

Then I went to see an Iraqi scholar this week to talk to him about elections here. He has been trying to educate the public on the importance of voting. He said, "President Bush wanted to turn Iraq into a democracy that would be an example for the Middle East. Forget about democracy, forget about being a model for the region, we have to salvage Iraq before all is lost."

One could argue that Iraq is already lost beyond salvation. For those of us on the ground it's hard to imagine what if any thing could salvage it from its violent downward spiral. The genie of terrorism, chaos and mayhem has been unleashed onto this country as a result of American mistakes and it can't be put back into a bottle.

The Iraqi government is talking about having elections in three months while half of the country remains a 'no go zone'—out of the hands of the government and the Americans and out of reach of journalists. In the other half, the disenchanted population is too terrified to show up at polling stations. The Sunnis have already said they'd boycott elections, leaving the stage open for polarized government of Kurds and Shiites that will not be deemed as legitimate and will most certainly lead to civil war.

I asked a 28-year-old engineer if he and his family would participate in the Iraqi elections since it was the first time Iraqis could to some degree elect a leadership. His response summed it all: "Go and vote and risk being blown into pieces or followed by the insurgents and murdered for cooperating with the Americans? For what? To practice democracy? Are you joking?"

#### INTRODUCING THE EMERGENCY RELIEF FOR CARIBBEAN NATIONALS ACT

HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 8, 2004

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, epic floods, death, and starvation. Unfortunately for the people of Haiti, Grenada and the Cayman Islands these are not Biblical times of which I speak, but the here and now.

Mr. Speaker, Tropical Storm Jeanne and Hurricane Ivan have particularly devastated Haiti, Grenada and the Cayman Islands. There

are no structures in place to respond to the needs of the populations, especially in areas like Gonaives, St. George and Grand Cayman, where Jeanne and Ivan hit hardest.

The unusual and extraordinary hurricane activity in the Caribbean during the 2004 season has prevented many Caribbean nationals in the United States from returning to their home countries, and for these countries to receive their repatriation.

Responding to these dire needs, I have introduced the "Emergency Relief for Caribbean Nationals Act," which designates Haiti, Grenada and the Cayman Islands under section 24 of the Immigration and Nationality Act in order to make nationals of those countries eligible for Temporary Protected Status (TPS).

Mr. Speaker, if there was ever a time for the federal government to grant Temporary Protected Status it is now.

TPS has been granted in the past to nationals of Sudan, Liberia, Guinea-Bissau, Somalia, Burundi, Bosnia-Herzegovina, El Salvador and Guatemala due to political unrest in those countries.

Also, TPS was granted to Hondurans and Nicaraguans after Hurricane Mitch in 1998 and to Salvadorans after an earthquake in 2001, and to Montserratians in 1995 after a volcano eruption. Sadly, Tropical Storm Jeanne and Hurricane Ivan caused similar devastation and suffering in Haiti, Grenada and the Cayman Islands, and in the same way merit TPS.

The startling facts of the natural disaster in the Caribbean are the following:

Tropical Storm Jeanne came ashore on the Island of Hispaniola, lashing first the Dominican Republic and then Haiti on September 16. When Jeanne hit, Haiti was already struggling to deal with political instability and the aftermath of serious floods in May. Nevertheless, Tropical Storm Jeanne hit Haiti with devastating force. More than 1,500 people are now known to have died and more than 1,000 are missing. Also, more than 300,000 people have been left homeless.

The situation is so calamitous that Haiti's Prime Minister Grerard Latortue said after visiting the stricken northern city of Gonoies, "We have a problem with bodies: there is a risk of epidemic. If you can picture this: there is no electricity, the morgues are not working, there is water everywhere."

Only weeks earlier, Hurricane Ivan, the strongest storm to hit the Caribbean in a decade, pounded Grenada. Hurricane Ivan killed 39 people in Grenada and left 40,000 of its 90,000 people living in 183 houses, schools and churches that have been converted into shelters. Grenada's capital, St. George, was hit by 125 mph winds—flattening homes and disrupting power. The storm destroyed the city's emergency operations center, the main prison, many schools, and damaged the main hospital.

Now an environmental health hazard has arisen in Grenada. The runoff, which contains pathogens from several sources, including human waste, is contaminating rivers where people are washing and bathing.

Thereafter, Hurricane Ivan blasted the Cayman Islands with 150 mph winds that ripped roofs off houses, uprooted trees and caused flooding across the British territory. 15 to 20 percent of homes on the eastern part of the Cayman Islands were completely destroyed, and another 50 percent suffered significant damage.

The extraordinary and temporary conditions caused by nature, and resulting in floods, epidemics and other environmental disasters in Haiti, Grenada, and Cayman Islands warrant granting their nationals Temporary Protected Status. Giving TPS to people from Haiti, Grenada and the Cayman Islands is consistent with the national interest of the United States, and denotes the values and morals that have made this nation strong.

Therefore, I urge you to cosponsor the "Emergency Relief for Caribbean Nationals Act."

## TOPICAL AGENDA

### HON. NEIL ABERCROMBIE

OF HAWAII

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 8, 2004

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. Mr. Speaker, great interest has been generated by the publication of a document from the 11th of February 2003 entitled "Topical Agenda". It involves the Department of Defense Personnel and Readiness Undersecretary and the Selective Service System and its Acting Director.

This document appears on the web site of "Rock the Vote". The interest is intense because of the content of the agenda. It involves a review of selective service major policy issues since 1973; a synopsis of Department of Defense Policy regarding the draft and a detailed proposal for the renewal of the draft and conditions attendant to it.

The participation of the Department of Defense in the discussion associated with the agenda has been confirmed by the Secretary of Defense. The DOD contention is that the meeting on the agenda was for purposes of discussion only and that it took place off Pentagon premises. Obviously, the location of the discussion and the origination of the agenda for discussion purposes is immaterial to the issue at hand. The point is the Department of Defense from the Secretary on down has vigorously denied that any such discussions have ever taken place let alone been contemplated. This document shows that a detailed proposal for a new draft involving men and for the first time women has been under consideration and discussion by the Department of Defense. It also clearly indicates that consideration has been given to drafting not only for military needs but for purposes associated with the Department of Homeland Security. In addition it proposes that the draft age be extended from 18 to 34. It includes a proposition that a "self-declaration" of skill sets be required of all potential draftees to be periodically updated until the age of 35.

It is not enough for the Department of Defense to say it rejects the proposal and its findings. Saying "no" doesn't make it so. Denials that any such consideration has even been given let alone presently extent ring hollow in the wake of the implications of this agenda and the Department of Defense's participation in discussing it.

Given the broad and deep concern of the public about the draft and the possibility of its being reinstituted it is imperative that the public be enabled to see, understand and analyze what the Department of Defense has had under consideration. The public, of course, can draw its own conclusions. The "Agenda" report follows.

## TOPICAL AGENDA

DoD Participants: Hon. Charles S. Abell, Principal Deputy Undersecretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness; Mr. William Carr, Acting Deputy Undersecretary of Defense for Military Personnel Policy; Colonel David Kopanski, Deputy Director, Accession Policy.

SSS Participants: Mr. Lewis C. Brodsky, Acting Director of Selective Service; Mr. Richard S. Ftahavan, Director of Public & Congressional Affairs.

### 1. Review 30-year time-line—SSS major policy issues

A. Draft ends in 1973; Agency placed in "Deep Standby" from 1976 to 1980. Ninety-eight "record-keepers" remain to SSS, part-time Reserve Officers kept on board, but no registration, no Board Members.

B. 1980—Cold War continues. President Carter decides to revitalize SSS after Soviets invade Afghanistan and MOBEXs indicate need. No draft, but resumes registration program for men. Wants to include women but Congress says no. 10,000 Board Members appointed and trained. DoD sets preparedness goal for SSS: "Be ready to provide first draftees to MEPS at M+13 and 100,000 by M+30."

C. 1988—Congress reacts to military medical shortages ("war stoppers"). Language inserted in the Defense Authorization Act telling SSS to develop a "structure" which would allow the registration and induction of health care personnel in an emergency. DoD identifies more than 60 health care specialties to include in the SSS Health Care, Personnel Delivery System (HCPDS). Planning calls for first HCPDS draftees by M+42. HCPDS becomes a paper and computer exercise lasting many years.

D. 1989-1991—End of Cold War, Desert Storm, no draft, and SSS remains in standby status with flat-lined annual budgets.

E. 1893 and 1994—Detractors in the Congress challenge need for continuing to fund SSS and peacetime registration. Section 647(b), FY 1993 DOD Authorization Act requires SECDEF, in concert with SSS, to report on continuation of peacetime registration. This was accomplished, registration is retained, and an interagency task force review was formed, led by the NSC. Conclusion is announced by President Clinton: preserve SSS and peacetime registration in current standby status for three reasons.

1. A hedge against underestimating the number of soldiers, needed to fight a future war;

2. A symbol of national resolve to potential adversaries; and,

3. A link between the all-volunteer Armed Forces and society-at-large.

Clinton also instructs SSS to increase operational efficiency. Instructs DoD to update MOB requirements for SSS, re-examine timelines, and review arguments for and against continuing to exclude women from registration.

F. 1994—Defense issues new "post-Cold War" guidance to SSS: "provide first untrained draftee to MEPS at M+193; first Health Care draftee at M+222," DoD reaffirms that it is not necessary to register or draft women (for a conventional draft of untrained manpower) because they are prohibited by policy from serving in ground combat assignments. SSS recognizes women may have to be included in a health care draft.

G. 1998—DoD Health Affairs says health care personnel would be needed earlier than M+222 in a future conflict. Guidance changed to M+90. Today, HCPDS can be implemented, but ability to meet M+90 time frame is doubtful. Program not fully tested and compliance aspects still not complete.

H. 1995 through 2000—Anti-SSS Members of Congress almost successful in eliminating

SSS through the appropriations process. SSS undergoes structure and program reductions to make ends meet. Readiness suffers.

I. 2000 and 2001—DoD and SSS plan and implement joint mailing project to increase peacetime relevancy of SSS and improve timeliness and address accuracy of DoD recruiting direct mail campaigns.

J. 2002 and 2003—Administration says use of draft not an option for war on terrorism or potential war with Iraq. Rep. Rangel and Sen. Hollings introduce bills (H.R. 163 and S. 69) call for reinstituting a draft for military and national service. SECDEF adamant and vocal against using the draft for any immediate or likely contingency. Most recently, Reps. Paul, DeFazio and Frank introduce H.R. 487, calling for repeal of the Military Selective Service Act and an end to the SSS within six months of the bill becoming law.

*Synopsis:* With known shortages of military personnel with certain critical skills, and with the need for the nation to be capable of responding to domestic emergencies as a part of Homeland Security planning, changes should be made in the Selective Service System's registration program and primary mission.

*Situation:* Currently, and in accordance with the Military Selective Service Act (MSSA) [50 U.S.C., App. 451 et seq.], the Selective Service System (SSS) collects and maintains personal information from all U.S. male citizens and resident aliens. Under this process, each man is required to "present himself for and submit to registration" upon reaching age 18. The methods by which a man can register with Selective Service include the Internet, mail-back postcard, checking a box on other government forms, and through the driver's license applications process in many states. The collected data is retained in an active computer file until the man reaches age 26 and is no longer draft eligible. It consists of the man's name, address, Social Security number, and date of birth. Currently, 91 percent of all men, ages 18 through 25, are registered, enabling the SSS to conduct a timely, fair, and equitable draft in the event the Congress and the President decide to reinstate conscription during a crisis.

However, the Secretary of Defense and Department of Defense manpower officials have stated recently that a draft will not be necessary for any foreseeable crisis. They assume that sufficient fighting capability exists in today's "all-volunteer" active and reserve Armed Forces for likely contingencies, making a conventional draft of untrained manpower somewhat obsolete. Yet, Defense manpower officials concede there are critical shortages of military personnel with certain skills, such as medical personnel, linguists, computer network engineers, etc. The costs of attracting and retaining such personnel for military service could be prohibitive, leading some officials to conclude that while a conventional draft may never be needed, a draft of men and women possessing these critical skills may be warranted in a future crisis, if too few volunteer.

*Proposal:* In line with today's needs, the SSS' structure, programs and activities should be re-engineered toward maintaining a national inventory of American men and (for the first time) women, ages 18 through 34, with an added focus on identifying individuals with critical skills.

An interagency task force should examine the feasibility of this proposal which would require amendments to the MSSA, expansion of the current registration program, and inclusion of women. In addition to the basic identifying information collected in the current program, the expanded and revised program would require all registrants to indicate whether they have been trained in, possess, and professionally practice, one or more